

What is claimed is:

1. A method for adding at least one special effect to the output media of a computer output device adapted to receive an input byte stream, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) identifying at least one byte string to act as a trigger for adding said at least one special effect to said output media;
 - b) determining when said at least one byte string occurs in said input byte stream to said computer output device; and
 - c) adding said at least one special effect to said output media in response to said at least one byte string.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said computer output device comprises a point-of-sale printer.
3. A method according to 2, wherein said output media comprises a receipt.
4. A method according to 1, wherein said byte string is a legacy text string.
5. A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of adding said at least one special effect to said output media is:
 - i) inserting a predefined portion of said input byte stream into a stored graphic for printing;
 - ii) merging a predefined portion of said input byte stream into a stored graphic for printing;
 - iii) inserting a graphic into a predefined portion of said input byte stream for printing;
 - iv) merging a graphic into a predefined portion of said input byte stream for printing;
 - v) replacing a predefined portion of said input byte stream with a stored logo for printing; or

vi) eliminating at least a portion of said predetermined input byte stream and merging a stored graphic with a remainder of said predetermined input byte for printing.

5. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of defining said special effect to be a surround graphic of a predetermined size.

6. A method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of defining said surround graphic to be a predetermined color.

7. A method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of defining said surround graphic to be a predetermined shape.

8. An article of manufacture having computer readable program code means embodied therein for adding at least one special effect to the output media of a computer output device adapted to receive an input byte stream, said article of manufacture comprising:

a) computer readable program code means for storing at least one byte string to act as a trigger for adding said at least one special effect to said output media;

b) computer readable program code means for determining when said at least one byte string occurs in said input byte stream; and

c) computer readable program code means for adding said at least one special effect to said output media in response to said at least one byte string.

9. An article according to claim 8, wherein said computer readable program code means for adding said at least one special effect to said output media is:

i) computer readable program code means for inserting a predefined portion of said predetermined legacy byte stream into a stored graphic for printing;

ii) computer readable program code means for merging a predefined portion of said predetermined legacy byte stream into a stored graphic for printing;

iii) computer readable program code means for inserting a graphic into a predefined portion of said predetermined input byte stream for printing;

iv) computer readable program code means for merging a graphic into a predefined portion of said predetermined input byte stream for printing;

v) computer readable program code means for replacing a predefined portion of said predetermined input byte stream with a stored graphic for printing; or

vi) computer readable program code means for eliminating a predefined portion of said predetermined input byte stream and merging a stored graphic with a remainder of said predetermined input byte stream for printing.

10. An article according to claim 8, further comprising computer readable program code means for defining said graphic to be a surround graphic of a predetermined size.

11. An article according to claim 8, wherein said byte string is a text string.

12. An article according to claim 9, further comprising computer readable program code means for defining said surround graphic to be a predetermined color.

13. An article according to claim 9, further comprising computer readable program code means for defining said surround graphic to be a predetermined shape.

14. A method of creating a trigger for signaling the addition of a special effect to the output media of a computer output device, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) setting the length of a input text string to serve as said trigger;
- b) setting the content of said text string;
- c) defining the location of said input text string relative to the intended location of said special effect;
- d) defining the type of said special effect to be added;
- e) defining the extent of replacement of said input text string by said special effect; and

f) storing said length, said content, said location, said type, and said replacement in computer readable memory accessible by said computer output device.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein said trigger is a legacy trigger.

16. A method according to claim 14, wherein said special effect is a surround graphic.

17. A method according to claim 14, wherein said special effect is a logo.

18. A method according to claim 14, further comprising defining the color of said special effect.

19. A method of adding a surround graphic to legacy data printed on the output media of a computer output device, said method comprising the steps of:

a) defining a set of surround graphic parameters identifying the type of said surround graphic, the starting column of said output media where said surround graphic will be added, the numbers of columns of said output media that said surround graphic will be surround, and the number print lines said surround graphic will surround;

b) defining a set of print area parameters identifying the starting column on said output media where said legacy data will be printed, the numbers of columns of said output media where said legacy data will be printed, and the number of print lines of said output media where said legacy data will be printed; and

c) printing said surround graphic and said legacy data on said output media according to said surround graphic parameters and said print area parameters.

20. A method of controlling the printing of a special effect on the output media of a computer output device adapted to receive an input byte stream from a legacy application, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) setting a feature mask having a plurality of predetermined parameters that define the intended printing characteristics of said special effect;
 - b) defining a first trigger for indicating when said special effect should be disabled according to said feature mask;
 - c) defining a second trigger to indicate when said special effect should be enabled according to said feature mask;
 - d) detecting said first and said second triggers in said input byte stream;
- and
- e) enabling and disabling said special effect according to said first and second triggers.

21. A method of adding graphics to the output byte stream of a host application for a computer output device, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) delaying for a predetermined number of bytes the processing of said output byte stream;
- b) defining a plurality of byte strings of less than a predetermined maximum length to be stored in non-volatile storage;
- c) managing said non-volatile storage to hold said byte strings;
- d) ordering said byte strings into a fast response;
- f) determining whether said output byte stream contains at least one matching byte string; and
- g) adding said graphics into said output byte stream in response to determining said matching byte strings are in said output byte stream.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into said input stream comprises merging said output byte stream with said graphics.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into said output byte stream comprises inserting predetermined portions of said output byte stream into said graphics.

24. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into said output byte stream comprises merging predetermined portions of said output byte stream without said matching byte strings with said graphics.
25. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into said output byte stream comprises inserting at least one logo into a predetermined portion of said output byte stream.
26. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into a said output byte stream comprises replacing said matching byte strings in said output byte stream with at least one logo.
27. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into said output byte stream comprises merging a predetermined portion of said output byte stream with at least one logo.
28. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of adding said graphics into a said output byte stream comprises eliminating said match string from said output byte stream and merging at least one logo with said output byte stream.